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FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4101
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MASERU

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 000109

DEPT FOR AF/S, AF/EX, DS/IP/AF, AND DS/IP/ITA
PRETORIA FOR DATT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/22/2019

TAGS: ASEC PGOV CASC LT

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER SURVIVES APPARENT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

CLASSIFIED BY: Elizabeth C. Power, Deputy Chief of Mission.

REASON: 1.4 (b)

Summary

¶1. (C) In the early morning hours of Wednesday, April 22, there was an apparent attempt on the life of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, while Lesotho security forces are investigating the incident and are releasing very little information at this time. Post's EAC has met and confirms

Gunfights across Maseru

¶2. (C) At approximately 3:00 a.m., Ambassador Nolan awoke to the sound of heavy gunfire in the Prime Minister's residence, whose back yard is

¶3. (U) At 3:45 a.m., gunfire was reported at Makoanyane Military Barracks, on the northern outskirts of Maseru. The same vehicles that had driven off town, where apparently the same assailants carjacked a taxi-bus and abandoned the military vehicle. The military police dispatched a helicopter to the scene, where one survivor was taken into police custody. Police have also taken several other suspects into custody. All gunfire ceased at approximately 8:00 a.m., and no further incidents were reported.

¶4. (C) Both Deputy Prime Minister Asao Lehohla and Minister of Communications (and LCD party leader) Mothethjoa Metsing have confirmed that they did not indicate his current location. All suspects involved in these incidents were wearing military uniforms; however, at least one suspect is not a member of the LDF. The remaining suspects' relation to the Lesotho Defense Forces (LDF) is not clear at this time. Police report that the one suspect is a South African.

Post Response

¶5. (C) Post convened an EAC meeting at 10:15 a.m. to discuss our security posture in light of these incidents. RSO reported that she is in Maseru and is not in danger. There is no indication that official or unofficial Americans are targets. Management Officer will revise and circulate post's telephone tree, as appropriate.

Comment

¶6. (C) There is no obvious connection between these events and today's elections in South Africa, except that the timing makes it more likely that the Prime Minister since the 1998 coup attempt.

¶7. (U) Rumors are now flying wildly about who may have been behind this attack on the Prime Minister, with some implicating the political opposition. NOLAN